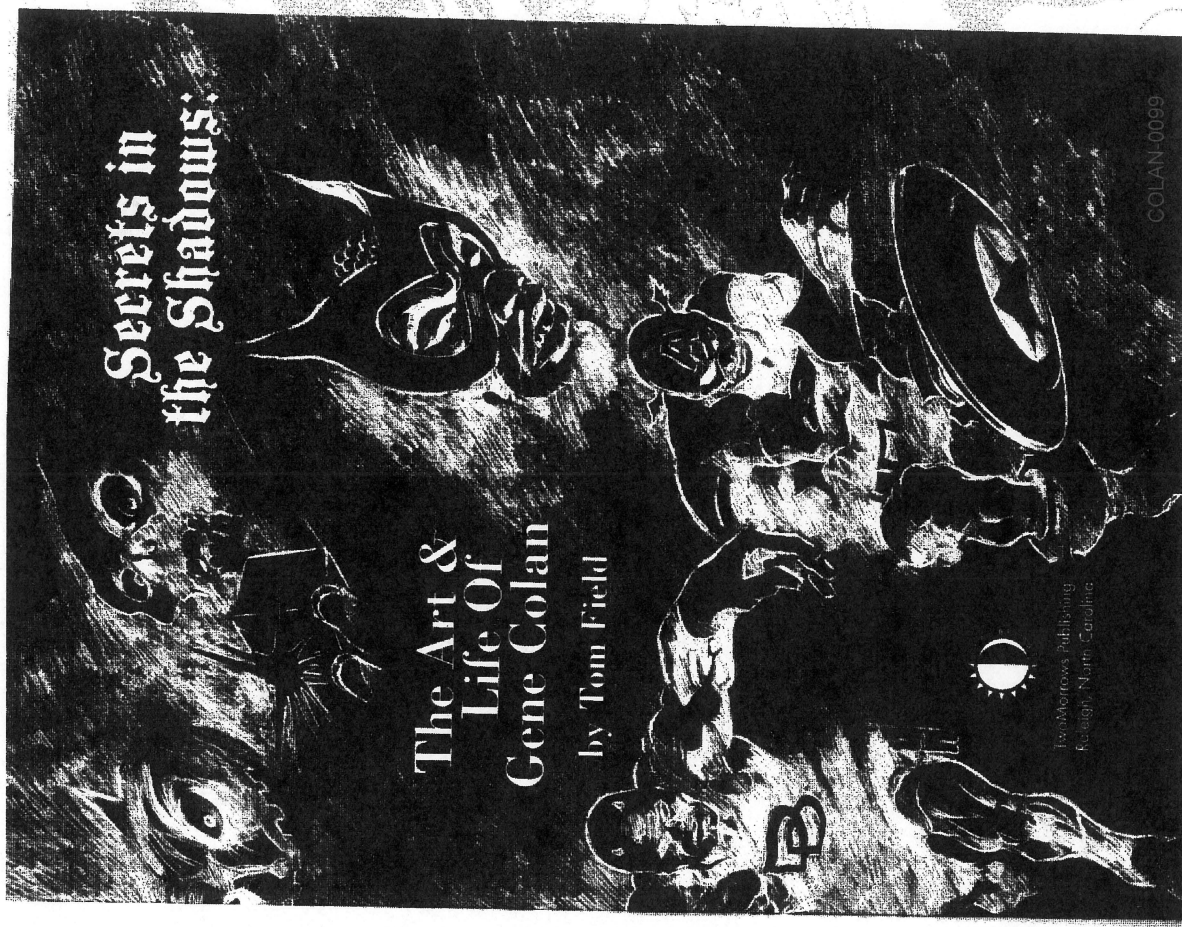


EXHIBIT 4



Secrets in the Shadows: The Art & Life of Gene Colan

by Tom Field

Book Design by Rich J. Fowlks



Published by TwoMorrows Publishing
10407 Bedfordtown Drive • Raleigh, NC 27614
919-449-0344 • www.twomorrows.com

Softcover ISBN #: 1-893905-45-4
Hardcover ISBN #: 1-893905-46-2
First printing, July 2005 • Printed in Canada

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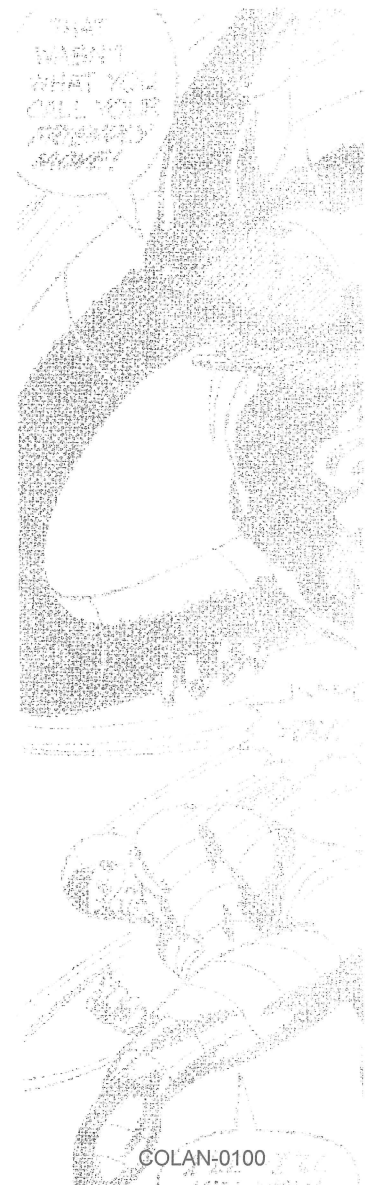
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Acknowledgements and Appreciations

So, it all started with a phone call from Glen David Gold.

He's been a friend of mine for a handful of years now, ever since we met via the Internet on the Gene Colan message board. We grew up on a lot of the same comic books in the 1970s, and we've had a ball swapping memories, insights and even original comic artwork – especially, Gene's.

Eventually, our conversation turned to what it would take for someone to put together the *perfect* Colan art book/biography. More than just a nostalgic look back on Colan's career, this book needed to be a history – a multi-faceted study of his personal and professional lives, reflecting on the impact of his 60-year comics career. We talked about this a lot, actually. The book needed to properly showcase Gene's life and life's work, and it needed to be written by someone who could have one foot in the comics world, the other in the *real* world, and be able to convey fundamentally: *Why Gene Colan Matters*.

Like us, in other words. This book needed to be written by Glen and me, with a little help from our friends. I think we knew that from the start, but the thought never became reality till late last summer, when Glen found himself in a conversation with John Morrow, publisher of TwoMorrrows books and magazines, and he actually started pitching the book. Next thing I knew, Glen was calling me saying "Call John Morrow." And then John Morrow was on the phone saying "Hey, go write a Gene Colan book!"

So, here we are. *Secrets in the Shadows: The Life and Art of Gene Colan* is exactly that – a portrait of an artist who doesn't just *portray* lives in nuance, he *lives* one. This book intends to show you where Gene Colan came from, what inspires him, his highlights and lows, his setbacks and successes. The comics fan will find a lot of rare, unpublished artwork within these pages. The more casual reader will come away with some insights on a pretty remarkable life. All of us, I trust – the readers and writers alike – will emerge from the experience knowing exactly why Gene Colan matters. If we succeed there... well, then we've just plain succeeded. Enjoy!

GENE COLAN

A hearty thanks to the folks who made this book possible, including...

Stan Lee, Roy Thomas, John Romita, Dick Ayers, Steve Leialoha, Dick Giordano, Joe Rubinstein, Tom Palmer, Gerry Conway, Marv Wolfman, Don McGregor, Steve Englehart, Steve Gerber, Jim Shooter and Clifford Meth, who all contributed insights into Gene's life and work.

Glen Gold, Michael "Doc V." Vassallo, Dave Gutierrez, Mark Staff Brandt and Calvin Reid, who all wrote and/or shared art for the book.

Mike Arnold, Michael Baulderstone, Lee Benaka, Philippe Benoist, Bruce Canwell, Jim Cardillo, Ivan Cheung, Steve Cohen, Michael Dunne, Len Fausto, Benny Gelillo, Steven Gettis, Frank Giella, Dave Gutierrez, Kevin Hall, Richard Howell, Mark Howland, Greg Huneryager, Bob McLeod, Jim McPherson, Dominic Milano, Mike Pascale, James Romberger, Brian Sagar, Mark Sinnott, Kevin Stawieray, Marc Svensson, Lars Teglbaerg, Tom Ziuko and *everyone* else who lent art – or just plain assistance – for this tome.

Rich Fowlks and John Morrow, who simply *saved* this book.

My dearest friends – you know who you are! – who simply cared. *Je t'aime!*

My wife, Cindy, and children, Justine and Dennis, who tolerated all my nights and weekends on the phone, online or closed in my office.

Adrienne and Gene Colan for opening their archives, their lives and their hearts to me.

My Dad, Percy Field, who redefined "hero" with the selfless way he served my Mom in her final days.

And finally my Mom, Elizabeth C. Field, who died on Good Friday, 2005. She bought me my first comic book when I was 4, and encouraged me to be a writer when I was 10. Little did she know all that would lead to *this*, and I do wish she were here to share the moment.

— Tom Field, June 2005



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

artists, to rely instead on freelancers.

"Everybody was milling around the art dept., not working," Colan says. "They were all stunned because they'd heard they'd got the pink slip—they were all out of a job. In my case, I just happened to be lucky enough to pick up work before the weekend.

"That's how it was for a freelancer."

Unlucky at Love

Throughout the turbulent 1950s, Colan's personal life kept pace with the ups and downs of his profession.

His emotional woes actually began in 1946, when he first returned from Manila and tried to resume his relationship with Toni. But having been virtually incommunicado for the nearly two years he was gone, Gene was not well-received.

"We had an argument because I didn't write while I was in the service," Colan says. To his mind, the oversight was simply chalked up to youth. "You get overseas, you're young, and you forget these things," he says. "I didn't think she'd remember me or care much about it."

He thought wrong. "Right away, she let me have it—oh, boy, she did," Colan says. "She put me in my place. I was all stuttering and stammering. I wanted to come back at her with something, but I couldn't. She was better with words than I was. I just let it go."

Soon after the split-up with Toni, Colan met another young woman named Sallee. "She lived only a few blocks from where I did," Colan says. "I was going out with her friend, and had seen Sallee once. We double-dated, and I was very taken by her—she was a very good looking girl."

Before long, talk turned to marriage—which seemed like the

natural thing to do for a young couple in their 20s. But even amidst the wedding plans, Colan had serious doubts about the couple's future. "I'd seen too many red flags in that relationship," he says. "I knew it would be wrong. But we do stupid things in our lives, and of course when you're young you do even more stupid things."

Gene and Sallee indeed did marry; they settled down in an apartment in Bronxville, and before long they were the parents of two young girls, Valerie and Jill, born in 1954 and 1957 respectively.

For most of the 1950s, Colan clung desperately to his rocky marriage. "I held on like you would hold on to the edge of a cliff," he says. "I didn't want to let go—there were children involved. But it was a disaster to me, and I couldn't cope with it."

Professionally, the course was no smoother. A full-time freelancer once he left Timely, Colan had to constantly hustle to line up assignments. And then once he secured them, he had to lock himself into his home studio to complete them. Colan was productive—he generally produced two finished pages per day, seven days per week—but he had to work nearly around the clock to succeed.

"I had to work my butt off all day, all night and into the next morning," Colan says. "My father would say to me, 'You think you're making money? You're going to hand all that back to the doctor!' My mother would say to him, 'Keep quiet, and let him work. A little work never hurt anybody.'"

Colan produced some wonderful genre work during this period—war, crime, western and horror stories for a variety of publishers, including Atlas, New Timely. And he did finally get attached to an ongoing character in 1954, when DC hired him to draw the comic book version of William Boyd's *Hopalong Cassidy* movies.

But at the same time, Colan felt besieged by some of the editors he worked with—two in particular: Harvey Kurtzman and Bob Kanigher.

In and Out at EC

In 1952, Harvey Kurtzman was one of the most powerful editors at one of the most influential comics companies, overseeing the groundbreaking adventure comics *Frontline Combat* and *Two-Fisted Tales* for EC Comics. Three years later, EC effectively would be shut down by the anti-comic book fervor ignited by

So, how could a young up-and-comer such as Gene Colan not want to draw for EC?

"I tried to get in with Harvey Kurtzman," Colan says. "But he was very difficult to deal with. I got one try-out, and I had to almost literally nag him into it."



EC Rarity: Splash to "Wake," Colan's one-and-only EC story, from *Two-Fisted Tales* #52, (1952).

Fredric Wertham's 1953 treatise *Seduction of the Innocent* and the U.S. Senate Subcommittee's 1954 investigation of juvenile delinquency. But in its heyday from 1950-1954, EC produced some of the medium's best artists, including Johnny Craig, Jack Davis, Frank Frazetta, Graham Ingels, Jack Kamen, Bernie Krigstein, John Severin, Al Williamson and Wallace Wood.



First Born: Colan's daughters Valerie and Jill, from his first marriage, circa 1958.

The try-out was the six-page war story "Wake!" which appeared in *Two-Fisted Tales* #30, Nov.-Dec. 1952. The story is signed by Colan and betrays great evidence of his textured penciling style, but also looks influenced by the cartoonier touch of Jack Davis, one of Kurtzman's regular stable of artists. Colan poured himself into this job, hoping it would lead to bigger and better work at EC. Then he invited Kurtzman home for dinner to discuss the audition. "He didn't really jump up and down over it," Colan says. "He didn't think I had hit the mark."

Colan never got another EC assignment after that—a distinction he shared with fellow comics great Joe Kubert, who was similarly rejected by Kurtzman.

Around that same time in 1952, Kurtzman was hospitalized because of exhaustion and jaundice. As a kind gesture, Colan visited Kurtzman's hospital room—and was summarily insulted. "He looked at me and said 'You're the perfect dupe,'" Colan remembers. The charge might have been accurate—Colan was young and green, and he would believe most anything that anybody would tell him. But Kurtzman's attitude and tone were totally off-putting. "He was kind of nasty about it," Colan says. "He was not someone I wanted to continue with, so I didn't."